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NEW ADDICTION RESEARCH CHAIR RECEIVES $2.25 MILLION

VANCOUVER – The Province's $2.25-million investment in a new B.C. Leadership Chair will support leading-edge research and the development of innovative treatment approaches by a world authority on addictions, Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell announced today.

"Addiction takes its toll on the lives of millions of Canadians, directly and indirectly, and costs our health-care system and our economy billions of dollars each year," said Coell. "The Province is dedicated to finding new ways to improve the lives of those struggling with addiction. By establishing this Leadership Chair with our funding partners, we will support groundbreaking work toward new and effective treatment approaches."

The first Addiction Research Chair at the University of British Columbia will be Dr. Michael Krausz, a noted psychiatrist and researcher, who will also hold a clinical appointment at St. Paul's Hospital, part of Providence Health Care. Krausz is a world authority on addiction treatment and led the world's largest addiction trial, carried out in Germany using heroin-assisted therapy. Examples of the research he will conduct in his new role will involve gaining a better understanding of the impact of life experiences like violence and sexual abuse on addiction, as well as looking at medications and other therapies that can improve people's lives.

"The Province is committed to attracting world-class researchers like Dr. Krausz to B.C.," said Coell. "His research will help the many people and their families who are suffering from the damage caused by addiction. We can justifiably be proud of how the government, through the Leading Edge Endowment Fund (LEEF), is supporting pioneering research in the province."

Funding for the B.C. Leadership Chairs was established with an initial provincial commitment of $45 million for LEEF. Twenty leadership chairs will each receive a total endowment of up to $4.5 million, which is cost-shared between the government and the private sector. St. Paul's Hospital Foundation has committed matching funding of $2.25 million for the Providence Health Care B.C. Leadership Chair in Addiction Research. This is the province's tenth B.C. leadership chair.

"The creation of this new Leadership Chair has provided me with the opportunity to bring my experience in addictions research to British Columbia," said Krausz. "Through research, we can better understand why people become addicted and develop new therapies and strategies to improve their lives."

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"We are very pleased to welcome Dr. Krausz," said Providence Health Care president and CEO Dianne Doyle. "At St. Paul's Hospital, we serve thousands of patients with addiction-related health problems every year. Thanks to the vision of the provincial government and the generosity of donors to St. Paul's Hospital Foundation who supported this cause, the Leadership Chair will be the cornerstone of a world-class addictions research program based in downtown Vancouver."

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